

T **News Letter** **TDARS**

G3ZME
G6ZME

TELFORD AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

www.TDARS.org.uk

FOUNDED 1969

www.TelfordHamfest.co.uk

Issue 286

Nov/December 2018

www.TDARS.org.uk

Programme

www.telfordhamfest.org.uk

- November 14** *RSGB Video presentation from past Conventions*
- November 21** *Ten Minute (or less) Talks by Members.*
- November 28** *Introducing YouTube videos on Amateur Radio (M0JZH)*
- December 5** *Committee Meeting—Club Call GX3ZME On-The-Air*
- December 12** *TDARS Annual Christmas Dinner. Grazing Cow, Lawley. Book now with form from Simon G0UFE: (latest 1st December)*
- December 19** *Informal social—Mulled Wine & Mince Pies*
- December 26** *Club Closed. But On-the-Air 8pm 144.600 MHz FM.*
- January 2** *Informal at club HQ.*
- January 9** *Annual Club Forum to share ideas—please share your views and ideas. 2019 is the TDARS 50th Anniversary: How shall we celebrate?*
- January 16** *Committee Meeting—discuss Forum outcomes.—GX3ZME OTA*
- January 23** *Winter Projects: Members' Update #2*
- January 30** *Surplus Sale for Members' equipment*
- February 6** *Committee Meeting—Club Call GX3ZME On-The-Air*
- February 13** *Social evening shared with the Bowls Club next door. 7:30pm*
- February 20** *Ununs and Baluns at HF and VHF. Brian G6UDX, Martyn G3UKV*

For Amateur Radio Exam Training—enquiries to Mike G3JKX (01952 299677)
For Morse Training and Morse Proficiency Tests Martyn G3UKV or Eric M0KZB.
For Equipment Loans & Returns contact Don M0TBQ.

Radio Amateur Exams- Latest: www.tdars.org.uk/html/training.html

VILLAGE HALL, MALTHOUSE BANK, LITTLE WENLOCK, TELFORD, SHROPSHIRE. TF6 5BG

Editorial

Next year we shall be celebrating TDARS's fiftieth year in existence, which is why the annual Forum arranged for January 9th (note swap with Committee meeting the following week) is a great opportunity for Members to say how they would like it to be celebrated. At our 25th anniversary in 1994 we mainly marked the occasion with a grand meal in the Wrekin View pub's restaurant, which was near the club QTH at that time (Dawley Bank). We searched our files and invited by letter every past and present member of TDARS to join in the event. It was a great success, and I know several members still have copies of the 'official photo' of the occasion taken in the car park area. Whatever we decide to do next year, the committee want your thoughts and suggestions at the Forum; so put JANUARY 9th 2019 in your diaries/smart phones !

I sometimes wonder why so many radio amateurs do not join their local radio club. We have around 35 members at present, out of about 245 listed amateurs living in the TF1-TF9 postal areas, according to the 2019 Yearbook. I know many are inactive, or hold multiple callsigns—and several current members live outside in the SY and ST postal areas anyway. So, what can a local radio club offer?

Firstly, it is a great social gathering of people holding similar interests in radio and electronics in a wider sense. They can (and do) offer advice and assistance to each other. Help given to newcomers is invaluable in many instances. Members often help with antenna ideas and erection (or removal !). Equipment is bought and sold at regular sales evenings—often at bargain prices. Quality equipment is available to borrow— for both operating and testing—an asset rather under-used lately. Assets can be pooled for a better outcome— such as on Field Days and portable outings. Guest speakers share their knowledge, background and exceptional experience at meetings. I expect you have your own reasons for belonging to TDARS—and I think it's significant that we have been awarded RSGB National Club of the Year twice; I believe only one other club in the UK has matched that record, of which we are justifiably very proud.

MIV

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News bits:

From Mike G6DFD...

M7 ? There has been much speculation recently about the allocation of M7 callsigns by Ofcom. Well it appears that the rumours are true.

The M6 series of callsigns is nearly exhausted, and as of mid-October 2018, Ofcom is now issuing M7 callsigns to new Foundation licencees.

Ofcom has confirmed that this is genuine, so listen out for the new guys with the new M7 call signs and welcome them to our hobby.

From John M0JZH . . .

G6ZME Club call has now transferred from Jim G8UGL (SK) to John M0JZH. Available for Club Members to operate— but request to John first.

TELFORD & DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY : 2018-19

CHAIRMAN: Eric Arkininstall M0KZB (01743 240286)

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Martyn Vincent G3UKV (01952 255416)

SECRETARY: John Humphreys M0JZH (07824 737716)

TREASURER: Paul Athersmith M0PLA (07966 969230)

CURATOR : Don Nicholls M0TBQ (01952 411680)



NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Martyn Vincent G3UKV (01952 255416)

PUBLICITY/WEBMASTER : Dave GOCER (01630 638699 or 07971 416940, leave msg)

Committee: Simon G0UFE; Brian G6UDX; Graham G7LMF; Village Hall Committee Liaison officer Martin 2E0TRO.
QSL Manager Paul M0PNN; Assist Curator: Chris 2E0EOH; Trophies/Certs: Martyn G3UKV.

Qtc: News & Information



TDARS MEETINGS EVERY WEDNESDAY AT LITTLE WENLOCK VILLAGE HALL UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE ON THE FRONT PAGE PROGRAMME. ROOM BOOKED FROM 7PM - 10PM. MEETINGS USUALLY COMMENCE AT 8PM

Please note: A current membership card may be required to borrow TDARS equipment. Please return borrowed equipment promptly .

Time to relax over a drink—the club meeting debrief across the way at the Huntsman:

Not all identifiable, but includes G0UFE, G6DFD, M6LLO, 2E1HTU, M0PLA, G6UDX. Who are the others ?

Photo: G3UKV



telfordhams



Following **Jim's** (G8UGL) **extremely generous donation** of two almost-new Gemini Amplifiers for 2 metres and 70cms to TDARS, they were advertised (tnx Paul 'PNN') and subsequently sold to a very happy gentleman from Bucknell. Thanks also due to Dave G0CER who arranged to transport the amps to the buyer at the RSGB Convention in October. Finally Paul (M0PLA) our new Treasurer, who had only just gained official recognition from HSBC bank, confirmed the sale was complete. Many other items from Jim's estate are still in storage, but will gradually be sold at appropriate times.

Note: The surplus equipment sale (January 30th) will give preference to Members' items; the Committee wish to thank those who held back their surplus at last month's sale so that we could give preference to Jim's equipment, and Hazel received some welcome cash !



The September G-QRP Buildathon and Telford HamFest were both highly successful, and we received a number of congratulatory comments and e-mails. Several Traders said sales were up this year, and numbers through-the-door were about the same as the last couple of years. Parking was a bit tight following the closure of the Aga Works car park in 2017, but we coped. The in-house Wi-Fi presented a strong signal at the venue, but was not accessible for most of the day, due to a technical hitch. As always each year, a problem or two arise and are fixed the following year—but then something else happens. It's known as S**'s Law.

The talk and presentation by Callum McCormick (M0MCX) will remain in Members' memories for a long time! He likes to be known as "DX Commander", and is quite a character who speaks his mind in a style he also uses on his YouTube site. Callum focused on simple wire and vertical antennas—emphasising that the antenna is THE most important part of an amateur radio station. A couple of interruptions during his talk (re kettle and car) caused some surprise and hilarity during the evening! The enjoyment seemed to be mutual in his later email to John 'JZH' :-

"John. I had a blast. You guys are right up there. Honestly the best club morale and reception I have had out of all the Midlands clubs.

Suggest you book me next year again. I am writing a 1-hour "stand-up" that I won't video - but I can roll out. Lots of anecdotes and general RF fun. It may take me a while to write though. Next year.. Spring / summer? "

TDARS Winter Projects — A Summary

There were about 10 suggestions for Winter Projects made at the initial meeting in October, and of these about four were chosen by members present as of interest to them. These were the Double Fishing Rod multiband Dipole, and a variation of this— a 2 element Beam for 20 metres (M0PNN) and the “Shackbox” designed by G0PJO, which is a multi function Arduino based gps gizmo that has a 4-line display showing date/loc/WAB/temp/pressure etc (G7LMF).

Also a noise cancelling kit, such as the one shown opposite purchased by Don ‘FHM from e-bay.



Graham ‘LMF sent out a more detailed list of his suggestions:

1. **HF Band Passive Noise Cancellation – G3ZIL (PW September 2018)** Uses a ‘noise antenna’ as well as your main antenna and consists of three modules, a switched attenuator, a passive combiner and a switched delay. **(about £20?)**
2. **VK5TM Noise Canceller- Homebrew version of the commercially available QRM Eliminator from SEM** <http://www.vk5tm.com/homebrew/noisecancel/VK5TM%20Noise%20Canceller%20webpage.pdf> **(kit from Australia about £30 +PP+VAT)**
3. **HF Antenna Analyser with Arduino and DDS Module-** A low-cost antenna analyser which can measure an antenna and display its VSWR over any or all of the HF frequency bands. It will find the minimum VSWR and corresponding frequency for each band but also will display a real-time VSWR for a user-selected frequency to facilitate antenna adjustment. If sweeping a single frequency band, it will display a graph of VSWR versus frequency. It also has a USB port on the back for outputting frequency and VSWR data, to allow more refined graph-plotting on a PC. The USB port can also be used to reflash the firmware if needed. <https://www.instructables.com/id/HF-Antenna-Analyser-With-Arduino-and-DDS-Module/> **(about £40?)**
4. **Universal HF Band Pass Filter -** For any single band, available for 10, 12, 15, 17, 20, 30, 40, 80 and 160 meters. <http://www.kitsandparts.com/univbpfilter.php> **(about £15 ~ £20?)**
5. **2KW Low Pass Filter for 160 – 6 meters – W6POL -** This is a bit pricy with the bare board costing \$45 and the full kit being \$475 so maybe give this a miss! http://w6pql.com/a_1.5kw_lpf_for_160-6m.htm **(about \$475)**
6. **Low-bands choke, mid-bands choke & high-bands choke – GM3SEK -** Three separate assemblies that can be used individually or in cascade <http://www.ifwtech.co.uk/g3sek/in-prac/index.htm#1005> Ferrites are available from various suppliers <https://uk.farnell.com/fair-rite/2643167851/ferrite-core-160ohm/dp/1463420?Ntt=1463420> **(about£15 ~ £25 each)**
7. **Shackbox – G0PJO (PW April 2018) -** Small Arduino based unit that uses a 20x4 LED panel to display date, time, temperature, pressure, altitude, latitude & longitude, Maidenhead locator / WAB square. **(about £10 ~ £15?)**

So there’s lots to choose from. Other members have their own alternative pet projects too !



**“Shackbox” (above pics) - M0PNN e-mail “It Lives haha haha . Total cost about £20 “
Also built by Graham ‘LMF.**

Thanks for Newsletter input this time:

**Mike G6DFD, John M0JZH, Eric M0KZB, Paul M0PNN,
Graham G7LMF, Graham G3VKV, Vic GW4JUN, Martyn G3UKV**

Next edition Jan/Feb : January 2019

Please keep it coming—contributors make the difference!

The Strongest Signal on the Band – by John M0JZH

I am fairly sure that you know that my favourite way of operating is portable – either QRP or QRO I don't mind, and this is something that both myself and Simon G0UFE have in common. It is not unusual for us not to speak about past or future portable events.

We planned one such outing for early October, to a location down in the South Shropshire Hills known as the BOG, but what style and what bands? At this point in the solar cycle we would need 80m – at least to start with and then move higher if required. We decided to use my “LFD” Linked Fan Dipole, 80/40m on the top element and 20/17 on the one below, using ex-military masts we managed to get a half wave 80m dipole up at 8 1/2m high and flat top.

First call went out on 20m into Portugal, and then try 80m. We worked solidly for 4 hours using our own callsigns with 100W, and not a gap between callers. It happened often that you would struggle to hear a callsign or a part of one there were that many people calling. We had a pile up, and quite a good one too! We were constantly praised for our signal and lost count of the times we were told that we were the strongest signal on the band.

At the time of packing up we had bagged 62 contacts – not massive but we were operating in a very relaxed chatty style. If someone wanted 5-10 mins chatting, then that is what we did. What a great day out. Was it a fluke? Solar conditions are poor, aren't they?

We decided to repeat the exercise, but we did not realise until a couple of days before we went out that we had picked the CQWW SSB contest weekend, that would slow us down for sure. We decided that instead of 20m to have 17m as our other frequency, we would start on 80m and then when the contesters would inevitably find the band then we would be hounded into submission and be forced to move – So 17m was there because the contest rules do not allow for operation on that one.

First call on 17m to check the antenna gave us OH6JJ, 300km North of Helsinki – not a bad start. Next a text from Graham G7LMF asking our frequency – we QSY to 80m 3.752, and made the contact, slowly followed by one or two more, but people soon found us and it was a constant stream of callers – the same as it had been previously. This time, not so many in the log – just 45, however we were not interested in making loads of calls, we were prepared to have a natter (something that does not happen too often – what's your callsign, again, again, again - OK 59 QRZ). Another enjoyable day once again being told countless times – You are the strongest signal on the band, not only that but the contest stations left us alone too. One of them tried opening up 1khz away from us, but he was chased away by Simon politely asking him to move. A few more got close, but they soon moved away too and left us alone. We closed down at 3:45pm and were still being called by many stations, we could have had at another hour or two and still be busy.

So, are the bands dead? Well our time spent down the bog would say not, and the amount of stations on the CQWW contest would seem to say it is not as bad as it would seem. But what does it take to be the strongest signal on the band? Well it does not take the best radio, it does not need to mean an amplifier. First, and most importantly have a good antenna. Good does not always mean expensive, we used a tuned wire dipole as high as we could get it. We also think that the ground that we had may well have had something to do with it, the water table there is quite high, and the amount of dissolved salts in it could be having a similar action to the known effects of the sea. But to be told that on 80m you are the strongest signal on the band and have a 4 hour pile up doesn't half give you a buzz.



G-QRP Buildathon and Telford HamFest 1-2 September 2018

Another couple of post-event comments from one of our excellent speakers, Vic GW4JUN, plus a few more piccies for posterity ! (Spot TDARS Members) :::

“ Well it was the first radio event I have been to for many years and it was great ! I did the Buildathon on Saturday and was hopping with delight when my Swiss Army Knife actually worked !

The talk went well , I think, and I also hope it might inspire a few more to have a go at some real radio. First time I have done anything like that, so it was a new experience for me. I also finally met Graham for the first time , and also Dennis at Kanga and a couple of guys I have worked on air but never met before , so I was well pleased. I also really enjoyed Barry's talk - fascinating stuff. “

“ I forgot to say "well done" to Heather and her team for all their work on the Buildathon event. It was a great project and the set up well arranged. I know that a huge amount of work is involved in organising these kinds of events. I really enjoyed it and I really appreciate the effort that went into making it happen. “



Speedy 2E0KLS,
Steve G0FUW,
Mike G3JKX



Buildathon discussions



2E0MRS Simon's new vehicle

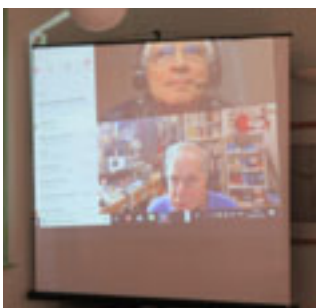


Snack time @ HamFest



Quiet moment at SK sales

Wi-Fi and video Skype
WORKED to USA—
eventually (phew !)



Another good weekend's work completed ...

Is Amateur Radio on Life Support? - By Martyn G3UKV

An on-going debate, both on the air, on social media and in the magazines has been taking place in recent months, about data modes, activity on the bands—both HF, VHF and above, alternative modes, “real radio” or “proper radio”, use of Internet links and so on: Is amateur radio doomed ?

One such article in the Cheltenham ARA (CARA) newsletter I came across recently expressed the frustration of a newcomer to the hobby who had been led to believe he could 'Work the world on a piece of wet string'. Of course, this has never been the case, although the present long, deep period at the bottom of solar cycle 24, when HF above 10MHz is often dead for long periods, and when activity on SSB or CW has declined markedly (except during contest weekends,) may give the impression of terminal decline.

My friend Graham, G3VKV (Cheltenham) came up with this response, describing his comments as the 'opinion of an old-timer, all bands 1.8MHz to 24 GHz' :-

“ A reply to “Is amateur radio on Life Support ? “

- 1) 'Worked USA twice' —Try harder it's not that difficult, especially with 100W.
- 2) 'Calling CQ 40 and 20 no reply' - Don't. Try calling someone instead.
- 3) Forget contests on HF unless you are competing (you are 59, please repeat your call !!)
- 4) 'Only worked one EI on 40m' - apart from the fact there are not many EI amateurs, this shows utter failure on your part, may I say
- 5) Network Radio to access EI repeaters—why not use your local repeaters more ?
- 6) Data modes are they Real Radio? - Yers, of course, computers are useful tools.
- 7) AM to SSB move—SSB is only AM with one sideband and carrier suppressed—most people saw the benefits—don't forget at one stage there were no transceivers and when I was first licenced VHF was all Xtal controlled AM (no VFO's) and separate receivers.
- 8) Amateur Radio is not doomed because of a low sunspot count—but it could be from lack of activity and apathy. Working VK with 10W and a wet piece of string is not the ultimate in our hobby. (it's nice to have done it though).
- 9) FT8 is not the only way—it is the easiest option, perhaps the only one (see below) (100 countries in 26 hours at this QTH !!)
- 10) Biggest problem is the QRM from VDSL2 on HF and eventually G Fast on VHF. BT have put the whole of HF in danger of obliteration by sending RF through copper wires (plus power line adaptors of course) - VHF is to follow (look up G Fast) 106MHz to 212MHz ++.

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Further TDARS notes:

Club Nets. Fewer participants of late. We meet on 144.600 FM Sunday evenings after 2100 hrs. Also the 3657KHz (+/- QRM) Monday and Friday nets from 08:45 am.

Newsletters. Hard (printed) copies are still available at TDARS Wednesday evening meetings. Otherwise they are usually circulated on the TDARS Yahoo reflector as well as on the tdars website, where zooming in helps resolution of smaller print and especially photographs. (20+ this Newsletter)

"Snap! " Worked All Britain 50th anniversary in 2019 (also TDARS). See following page flyer sent in by Graham G7LMF

At the funeral of Jim, G8UGL (SK) at Telford Crematorium (Sept. 6th) more than 30 past and present tders members and partners were present. His ashes were spread on the summit of the Brown Clee on his birthday, October 24th, at around midday by Hazel in glorious weather.

Some older members of TDARS will also recall *past-member Peter G3MWQ* who lived in the Wellington area. He enjoyed the experimental aspects of amateur radio and was on the Telford Rally committee for several years. He was active on both HF and VHF, but is particularly remembered for his salesmanship of surplus equipment (and even empty boxes) at club sales. Peter was a pharmacist by profession, and spent several years in the Wellington branch of Boots. After a long illness following a stroke, Pete died on 14th of October, and was buried in Kidderminster on Monday 29th Oct. He leaves his wife Rosemary and three adult married daughters.
RIP Peter



26th December 1938 – 14th October 2018

WAB's 50th Anniversary Awards

In 2019 WAB celebrates its 50th Anniversary. To commemorate the occasion, we have introduced three awards to run for that year only. The precise requirements have yet to be finalised, but this flyer will give you a flavour of what is to come.

Firstly, we have an award running on similar lines to our Ruby and Sapphire anniversary awards. It is based on a points system and around the number 50. Stages will be in steps of 10 points, with trophies every 50. Points are gained for the following elements of the award scheme:

- 10km Grid Squares
- WAB Book Holders
- 100km Large Squares
- Decade Award
- Islands
- WAB Commemorative Callsigns and WAB Club Callsigns
- 10km Grid Squares containing the number 50
- Countries in which you work a WAB Book Holder
- Trigs Points in the "50" squares

We will also be running two more simple awards for working multiples of 50 squares and for working the squares containing the number 50. It is hoped that the latter two will appeal especially to less active WAB member and encourage them to participate more fully in the scheme.

Full details will be published when finalised, both in the Newsletter and on our website:

www.worked-all-britain.org.uk

Happy WABing in 2019!

73, The WAB Committee



This is a first draft only and may not be the final design.